Final Lecture

Metaphors for Peace

Gerry Yokota

Taking shelter under the same tree,
drinking from the same stream,
this is our destiny. (Yamanba)

Introduction

To what degree does tradition exert a negative, oppressive force, and to what degree might it also exhibit egalitarian, emancipatory potential? What tools are at the disposal of teachers, researchers, and individual aficionados to intervene and affect the dominant discursive balance? What is our responsibility? These are the questions I have pursued throughout my career studying the function of traditional Japanese culture in international settings, both in public settings such as diplomatic exchange and in interpersonal intercultural communication, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to share in retrospective some of the highlights of my findings over the past thirty years.

When I first came to Osaka University back in the eighties, I was not planning on staying here permanently. I was here to conduct research for my doctoral dissertation with a research grant from the Japan Foundation, affiliated with the Drama Department in the School of Letters. If I had returned to the U.S. and taken up a position at an American university in Japan Studies, which was my original career plan, my life would no doubt have proceeded in a relatively straight line as I established my position as a specialist in Japan Studies there.

Once I made the decision to stay here, I felt compelled to refine my niche, and was inspired to do so by focusing on archetypes and metaphors in Noh, and how they translate into English. Applied cognitive linguistics became my bridge, or perhaps I should say net or web, connecting my research and teaching in Noh, English, and gender studies. I did not wish to sacrifice any of these loves to the other; I wanted them to be mutually nurturing, and so I chose to treat the art of Noh as a medium for intercultural communication by exploring what is lost and found in the translation of metaphors.

The highlights I have selected to share here are some of the powerful archetypes of women and men in Noh who, I might say, have sustained my soul in the course of my career. I hope this essay conveys some suggestion of I have been nurtured by their spirit, and maybe even offer some inspiration to students and colleagues about how you may find such guides in your own research, teaching, and life.

Archetypes and Metaphors in Noh

The classical canon of Noh is divided into five categories, largely determined by the nature of the main character. The first category is gods and goddesses. The second category is warrior ghosts. The third category is predominantly mortal women, but also includes the spirits of flowers, plants, and trees as well as a few birds, butterflies, and men; its unifying theme might be said to be beauty. The fourth category features more dramatic interpersonal struggles, in contrast to the earlier categories which depict more peaceful interactions between humans and the divine, or more internal psychological conflict. The fifth category features spectacular plays, often depicting the heroic conquest of demons.

In my 1997 book on the formation of the canon of Noh, I focused on the first category of gods and goddesses because I judged that the emphasis on orthodoxy in this group made it the best choice for exploring issues of canonicity (Robinson 1985; Guillory 1993), the invention of tradition (Hobsbawm 1983), and the

representation of gender (Berger 1973; Hall 1997). Since then, I have continued to publish a series of studies of selected plays treating the use of metaphor in the representation of gender in all five categories, with a view toward implications for intercultural communication. And in the process, my conviction about the power of art, not only from popular culture but also from traditional culture, to facilitate intercultural communication has been constantly reaffirmed, as these archetypes and metaphors have been evocative guides in my quest to find my own voice as well.

In the following sections, I will take up selected dominant archetypes and metaphors in each category and show how they have informed my pilgrim's progress. The order is not simply mechanical; the patterning of the canonical program is itself based on what you might call cosmological musical principles which I have found to naturally correspond to the stages of my life.

The First Stage: Goddesses and Gods

Why should we too not be blessed
to hear the name of the divine mother
of times gone by? (Unoha)

The classical canon of Noh includes over two hundred plays. The entire corpus obviously would have been too large for me to treat in my doctoral dissertation. I chose to focus on the first category not only because of its ordinal position, but because I was troubled by the imbalance between masculine and feminine deities. A preliminary survey had revealed the following trends in the five subcategories of deity plays, which are conventionally classified according to the dance that is performed by the main character in the highlight scene:

–eight out of nine deities in the *kamimai* subcategory are masculine (88%);
–all 12 deities in the *hataraki* subcategory are masculine (100%);
–eight out of nine deities in the *gaku* subcategory are masculine (88%), though it must be noted that this subcategory actually includes one more play which is not included in these calculations because the main characters are a turtle and a crane of unspecified gender;
–three of the four deities in the *shinnojonomai* subcategory are masculine (75%); and
–all three deities in the *chūnomai* subcategory are feminine.

It will be noted that the ratio of masculine deities declines from first to fifth subcategory. This ordering must be taken into consideration, rather than simply calculating the average for the whole group, because this list is hierarchical. The small group that includes only feminine deities is the group with the lowest status. Whereas all the other dances were originally choreographed for deities or high-ranking male shamanic figures, according to Takemoto Mikio of Waseda University, the feminine *chūnomai* is a dance that was originally developed for mortal women in the third category, not for feminine deities (Takemoto 1978).

I also learned from Takemoto's work that many plays featuring feminine deities had been composed in the early years of the founding of the art, but over the centuries they had been gradually revised, reclassified, or excluded from the canon.

And so it was most exciting to learn that there was a Noh actor in Osaka, Ōtsuki Bunzō of the Kanze School, who had taken note of this history and had taken the initiative to revive some of these excluded plays on the contemporary stage. I had the great honor to be invited to observe the backstage process of revival of some of these plays, and Master Ōtsuki later provided the lovely photo of one of them that graces the cover of my book, as well as those included in every chapter.

That play, *Unoha* (Cormorant Feathers), tells an archetypal tale of a divine marriage, the breaking of a taboo during childbirth, separation, and reconciliation. Its primary symbols are three: a dragon, which in the Asian mythical context has the power to traverse sea, earth, and sky; a pair of jewels that give their owner the power to control the ebb and flow of the ocean tides; and cormorant feathers, which were used to thatch the parturition chamber of the dragon princess who married a Japanese god.

I found this dragon princess, Toyotamahime, an especially empowering figure for a number of reasons. She commands respect for her privacy and dignity, asking her husband to leave her undisturbed when she is giving birth. She leaves him when he breaks his promise. She later finds reconciliation, and offers the ebb-and-flow jewels as a token of her forgiveness, together with a challenge to wield their power responsibly.

The Second Stage: The Dual Way of Brush and Sword

You are not my enemy. (Atsumori)

The second category of warrior ghost plays is the smallest of the five, with less than 20 plays, and only one of these features a woman warrior. For a feminist scholar, she might appear to be the natural choice for a research project on the representation of gender in Noh. But in the course of my quantitative analysis of the group of deity plays, I had come to be wary of the risk of dividing the deities according to the simple binary, masculine and feminine. Indeed there is one deity play in the current canon where the main character can be performed either way: some schools portray the Sun Goddess Amaterasu in masculine form.

I also came to realize that while my study of feminine deities in the first category had been very empowering, a woman warrior was not the sort of archetype I looked to for a sense of empowerment due to my pacifist convictions. Indeed, the warrior ghosts of the second category of Noh for the most part are not victorious heroes. Only two of them are victors; all the others are antiheroes—members of the losing Taira clan. And yet it would be going too far to say that these are anti-war plays. The focus is rather on the Buddhist theme of realizing the suffering that is caused by attachment to desires, such as the warrior's desire for glory.

The archetypes that most inspire me from this category are the ghost of the young Taira warrior Atsumori, from the eponymous play, and Rensei, the adversary who killed him. In this play, the ghost appears on earth not to a passing stranger, the dominant setting for this genre, but to the enemy who killed him in battle and later entered the priesthood out of remorse.

Like other warrior ghosts in this group, Atsumori is an artist. He plays the flute, while others are famed for talents such as writing poetry or playing the lute.

The Japanese idea of *bunbu ryōdō*, the dual way of brush and sword (literally the art of letters and the art of war), is sometimes viewed as analogous to the Western idea that the pen is mightier than the sword, but there is a subtle difference. The Japanese expression makes no claim to the superiority of one way over the other, but only denotes their coexistence. In this play, Atsumori's music is not directly the source of his spiritual salvation. However, his music does have the power to bridge the worlds of the living and the dead and appeal to his former foe to play an intercessory role and pray for his release from the torment of his desire to return to the world of the living. In the process, the two men realize their common humanity and the vanity of categories such as enemy.

The Third Stage: Gender as a Spectrum

Mount Kazuraki:
a flash of light in the shadows beneath the trees.
Was it the lightning-husband and the ricefield-wife,
or was it the fire
struck by the mountain-conquering priest? (Kazuraki)

I actually felt strong resistance to exploring the third category, traditionally known as women plays, or metonymically speaking, wig plays, since the art of Noh was traditionally performed only by men for centuries. My dominant perception of this group was that the typical heroine was the woman who waits eternally for her unfaithful husband to return. Not exactly my kind of role model.

And yet I knew could not avoid this path if I wanted to be satisfied that I had taken responsibility for having made the choice to commit my career as a researcher to this male-dominated art. I had often tortured myself with guilt for not having devoted more of my effort and resources to the discovery of female talent. I have

published several articles on women composers and performers of New Noh, but my Internal Censor keeps hissing that my feminist friends can hardly be expected to accept that as enough.

Fortunately, in the process of rediscovering the lost goddesses of the first category, I had found the beginnings of an answer to this dilemma. Canon theory confirmed my intuition that we can never abolish canons; all we can do is intervene in dominant discourse so as to raise awareness of the biased nature of any canon, and advocate for the deconstruction of any such oppressive structure, trusting that such intervention is as worthy a feminist endeavor as the discovery of female talent. It was now time for me to test this hypothesis. Was I only deceiving myself? I made three major discoveries which I hope may be judged to justify my choice.

My first discovery upon exploring the group systematically was that, with proactive intervention in audience reception, challenging oppressive norms, the classical canon contains considerable potential for interpretation not as perpetuating but rather as deconstructing conventional ideas about femininity and masculinity.

Like the first category, the third category is conventionally organized according to the dance performed by the main character in the highlight scene and the orchestral accompaniment. But because ritual orthodoxy is more central to the ceremonial first category, hierarchical status is more prominent there, whereas this grouping is related more to aesthetics and appears to have nothing to do with status, whether worldly or divine.

Consider the subtle change of perception that is effected when one realizes this canonical group of 42 plays actually includes the following character types, beginning with the rarer sorts:

> –one play featuring the spirit of a butterfly, one the spirit of a chicken, one the spirit of snow, and one a mountain deity, all in feminine form;
> –two plays featuring feminine angels who temporarily descend to earth from heaven;
> –two plays featuring a historically famous male poet;
> –eight plays featuring the spirits of flowers, vines, and trees, including two blossoming cherries, one blossoming plum, a maple, a willow, a plantain tree, a water iris, and wistaria, with six appearing in feminine form and two appearing in masculine form;
> –26 plays featuring mortal women, including the author of *The Tale of Genji*, the unnamed wife of the famous male poet featured in the two rare plays listed above, two historical empresses, three famous historical female poets (some featuring in multiple plays, for a total of six), four fictional characters (all from *The Tale of Genji*), four nameless universal archetypal women, and eight dancers.

Obviously this categorization is not unproblematic. Should the four fictional characters be included in the group of mortal women or in a separate category? I combine them here because I judge they are all being presented to the audience to be appreciated for their humanity, regardless of the fact that four of them never existed in the real physical world. Likewise, the unnamed wife could have been included in the group of nameless universal archetypes. Here, I have judged that her identity as an individual, albeit unnamed, is distinctive enough to warrant a separate listing.

My goal in presenting these dramatic characters in this particular configuration is to demonstrate how strongly cognitive categories affect our perception. This is a lesson I first learned from George Lakoff's cognitive linguistic study *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (1987), which continues to inform my research today on the power of rhetoric and art to affect our perceptions of others, including the value judgments associated with traditional representations of femininity and masculinity.

Viewing the third category from this perspective, I thus confirmed the value of continuing my analysis of dominant canons. While the play about the unnamed wife who waits eternally for her unfaithful husband to return may seem to be the most popular play in this category, it is by no means representative of the spectrum of humanity commemorated in the group. The two masculine tree spirits and the male poet featured in two plays are here for a reason, and that is their love of beauty. Their desire to share that beauty transcends gender stereotypes. And regardless of authorial or editorial intent on the part of the composers or guardians of the

canon, we the readers and viewers have the power to view, patronize, and advocate for the interpretation of their inclusion in this category as a witness (dare I say prophetic?) to that transcendent love for posterity.

Or could I be overcompensating, compelled by the force of romantic rhetoric? To further test this possibility, I confronted another significant factor in the third category, the dynamic between the main character and the witness, which is very different from the dynamic observed in the first category. Hence my second discovery.

While my discovery of the amazing goddesses of the first-category deity plays was personally empowering, I had to acknowledge that their influence did not trickle down to the third category so easily, much less to the human world. And the main reason was the perpetual existence of the witness figure on the Noh stage, who is in every canonical text explicitly created male from the start. In the first-category plays, this male witness, usually a Shinto priest or envoy from the imperial court, exhibits a respectful attitude of reverence toward the deity, whether the feminine minority or the masculine majority. But in the third-category plays, he is most often a Buddhist priest offering to save the suffering woman from her sins.

It was this comparison of the dynamic between these two roles in the two subcanons that inspired me to ask the question which led to my second discovery: What might happen if this witness's role were played by a woman?

The Noh profession has been officially open to women since 1948, but most women seeking to enter the field aim for training as a *shitekata* (the prime role involving masks and costumes, song and dance), not a *wakikata*, the unmasked witness role which in the vast majority of plays involves crossing the stage only to sit silently in the corner for most of the time, observing the revelation of an otherworldly spirit. The art developed over the centuries so that performers of primary female roles use masks because the performers were all male for centuries; and even now a female performer will generally still use a mask because it is such an integral part of the art as it has evolved, the mask being an exquisite work of art in itself. It is not hard to imagine why women seeking to enter the field would aspire to play these active leading roles.

The witness character, on the other hand, being specified as male in the libretto, has thus traditionally always been played without a mask. It is intriguing to imagine what might happen to the dramatic dynamic if a woman were to take this role. Personally I would resist the idea of wearing a man's mask. Not because it would disturb the traditional aesthetic, which I am all for disturbing if its ultimate effect is more alienating and oppressive than emancipatory, but because I believe it would be far more interesting to rewrite the text—with respectful acknowledgment of the original—to make the character female and see how a woman's gaze (Mulvey 1989) affects the interpersonal dynamic.

My third discovery relates to the idea of beauty. Despite the popularity of third-category plays featuring beautiful young women, the dominant aesthetic of the third category of Noh is not the oppressive aesthetic of youthful beauty. The highest esteem is reserved for the beauty of old age exemplified by the phrase "fresh blossoms on a withered bough"—the beauty of the young at heart. The five schools of Noh have a strict training curriculum for their actors, and the three plays signifying the highest rite of passage for a master of the art are all third-category plays featuring old women: one featuring a former dancer in old age (*Higaki*), one the anonymous universal archetype of an elderly woman who is abandoned in the mountains to die by her family (*Obasute*), and one a portrait of a famous poet in old age (*Sekidera Komachi*).

When one realizes that the ideal of beauty commemorated in this group is not limited to the stereotypical beauty of feminine youth, one also finds a renewed appreciation for the inclusion of historical male figures such as Ariwara no Narihira (in the plays *Oshio* and *Unrin'in*) and nature spirits appearing in masculine form (in the plays *Saigyōzakura* and *Yugyōyanagi*). I also came to realize that this aesthetic principle encompasses the beauty of gender fluidity, as expressed in the play *Kazuraki*.

It will be recalled from my list of third-category character types that the third category features primarily mortal women, with a few spirits of plants and trees (in both masculine and feminine form), a couple of historical male figures, and four anomalous types represented by one play each: one mountain deity and the spirits of a butterfly, a chicken, and snow.

Kazuraki is the play featuring a mountain deity. This deity, Hitokotonushi, is traditionally conceived of as a masculine deity, although indigenous deities are notoriously gender fluid because of the general lack of iconography in that spiritual tradition, in contrast with the extensive iconography of the institutionalized Buddhist religion.

The dominant interpretation of *Kazuraki* is that it portrays a power struggle between the indigenous spiritual tradition now known as Shinto and the imported Buddhist religion which came to be officially adopted by the Yamato court. The Buddhist mystic En no Gyōja subjugated the local indigenous deity Hitokotonushi and then forced him to build a bridge between two mountain peaks. The higher mountain peak was appropriated for the Buddhist temple; the lower peak was where the local deity would be enshrined as a guardian or local avatar.

And Hitokotonushi appears in beautiful feminine form in this play to express the indignity he suffered at the hands of his tormentor. In the highlight dance at the climax of the play, the deity performs a dance called the Yamatomai, Yamato being the name of the early Japanese state that was established by subjugating Hitokotonushi's tribe. In this ritual of submission, Hitokotonushi wears a crown of vines, a symbol analogous to the Christian crown of thorns. They are the same vines that the Buddhist mystic used to punish the indigenous deity for his failure to complete his cruel task.

The Fourth Stage: Liberation from Fear

If we were in Paradise,
then it might have been wrong,
but since we are outside
why should there be a problem
(with my sitting on a stupa)? (Sotoba Komachi)

As with the third category, my strongest resistance to the fourth group was my perception that it was dominated by another harmful stereotype, in this case the jealous woman. I struggled with the fear that it perpetuated a bias that would not be easily compensated for by either the powerful goddesses of the first category or the sublime crones of the third, especially because this is the largest of the five categories. My first step in overcoming this fear was to realize that the influence of the group as a whole, despite its size, was contained in relative safety by the canonical standard of decorum, whereby only one play was traditionally performed in a five-play program.

With over eighty plays, the fourth category exhibits the greatest variety, and is usually referred to simply as the miscellaneous category, lacking any single unifying motif. Plays are conventionally classified not by dance but primarily by emotion. They are divided into seven groups by Komparu Kunio as follows:

–nine quasi-wakinō, featuring lesser deities in situations more familiar and less ceremonial than the orthodox first-category wakinō (deity plays);
–28 plays featuring characters possessed by madness;
–seven plays taking entertainment or play as their theme;
–seven plays showing heartbreak;
–seven plays on the theme of jealousy;
–nine plays dramatizing emotional encounters; and
–18 plays presenting dramatic conflict.

Typical characters from each group include a minor god who is offended because a poet passed by his shrine without dismounting from his horse to pay his respects; a mother seeking her child who has been kidnapped by slave traders; a wizard who captured the dragon gods who control the rain only to have his magic undone by a beautiful woman; men who are tortured by guilt for killing animals; a lonely wife consumed by anxiety, certain her husband's long absence means he has abandoned her; an exile who is left behind when his fellow prisoners are granted amnesty; and a loyal retainer who risks his life to protect his master.

Quantitative analysis was also reassuring as I came to realize that plays featuring jealous women are in fact few. Though the relative popularity of the theme should not be underestimated and I maintain conscious vigilance in this regard, I had to admit my sensitivity to the stereotype may have led me to project more defensive fear than may have been warranted. Numerically speaking, I found the gender balance among plays featuring mad and jealous characters to be generally even, while the other five subcategories feature far more men.

And so in this case I judged it would be far more constructive to experiment with adjusting my own possibly skewed perception of the dominant characteristics of the category rather than rigidly insisting on the negative potential of a limited number of plays. For example, I was compelled to ask:

> --To what degree should the predominance of plays about mothers seeking lost children be viewed as potentially perpetuating a limiting stereotype of motherhood, and to what degree should their potential to evoke empathy be recognized?
> --What determines the relative weight?
> --How much potential does the scholar of language and culture, gender and literature have to intervene to tip that balance?

These became my research questions as I sought to use critical discourse analysis to clarify the potential of art and rhetoric to promote intercultural communication and gender literacy.

As my point of intervention I took the archetypal figure of Ono no Komachi, one of the Six Immortal Poets of the Heian court. Komachi was active at court in the ninth century and her life and poetry inspired numerous legends, including didactic Buddhist morality tales. She features in three third-category plays, as well as two in the fourth category and at least one noncanonical New Noh composed by a woman. These plays portray Komachi at various stages of life, and it is interesting that of the three third-category plays, two portray her at an extremely advanced old age. It is also noteworthy that only one of the canonical plays presents her as a ghost; all the others present her in real time.

The five canonical Komachi plays display the following features:

> –the third-category play *Sōshiarai* (The Washing of the Scroll, alternatively known *as Sōshiarai Komachi*) portrays a living Komachi at her peak, shaming a rival male poet at court who attempted to libel her by producing a forgery which purported to prove she had engaged in plagiarism;
> –the third-category play *Ōmu Komachi* (Komachi the Parrot) presents her as a living, aged recluse replying to a solicitous poetic inquiry from the emperor by changing just one syllable in his poem to form her respectful response;
> –in the third-category play *Sekidera Komachi* (Komachi at Sekidera Temple), the head priest introduces a group of children to the living, aged poet on the evening of the Star Festival, in the hope that she will impart some of her literary wisdom;
> –in the fourth-category play *Kayoi Komachi* (Courting Komachi), her spirit appears in a vision to a Buddhist priest, and the priest can also see the spirit of the angry suitor who tortures her for spurning his advances; and
> –in the fourth-category play *Sotoba Komachi* (Komachi and the Stupa), she appears as a living, aged beggar who is at first despised by a group of arrogant Buddhist priests but inspires them to repent their pride; in the end, she demonstrates her ability to sublimate passion through poetry and transform it into enlightenment.

The primary lesson I have taken from my study of the miscellaneous fourth category focusing on the Komachi archetype is this: Not only is the fourth category far more diverse than I had perceived it to be, even more diverse than its size indicated, but the diversity of approaches to this archetypal figure even in such a traditional classical canon says something about the art of Noh and its potential for intercultural communication, especially for its affirmation of the power of language.

Just as I came to realize that the ideal of beauty expressed in the third category transcended the oppressive valorization of feminine youth, so I realized that the fourth-category plays featuring men and women

possessed by jealousy could also be interpreted as commemorating the beauty of sublimating such passions rather than repressing them. And that sublimation is often expressed in passionate poetry.

I also found that, just as plays featuring goddesses had been excluded or heavily edited, so had at least one play about Komachi, though both the intent and the effect may differ. The current version of *Sotoba Komachi* ends with her overpowering the demon of the jealous suitor who attempts to possess her. But this is a revision by Zeami, the founder of the art of Noh, of an early play by his father Kan'ami.

In the earlier version, after achieving release from the demonic possession (through her own power, not through the intercession of a priest), Komachi travels to the shrine of the goddess of poetry, Soto'orihime, and is graced by a divine revelation. As opposed to the revisions to the canon of deity plays which resulted in a reduction in the aura of feminine power, in this group of plays about mortal women and men, such a revision may be seen as enhancing the impression of Komachi's authority rather than depicting her as submissively worshiping a higher power.

This impression is reinforced by the tendency in other revisions by Zeami of earlier plays to intensify the sense of irony. This is not an anachronistic reading. The medieval period when the art of Noh was founded is called the age of *gekokujō*, when the low overturned the high. The impromptu poem cited above with which Komachi teases the pompous priests in *Sotoba Komachi*, punning on the words outside (*soto wa*) and stupa (*sotoba*), is emblematic of Zeami's ironic style.

Thus, while there are a few Noh plays exploring the psychology of women gripped by jealous emotions, it is empowering to know that there are as many or more depicting women who put jealous men to shame (*Sōshiarai*), women who know how to say no (*Kayoi Komachi*), women who are admired and respected both by children (*Sekidera Komachi*) and by emperors (*Ōmu Komachi*), women who can hold their ground in philosophical arguments with haughty bigots and who can maintain presence and poise even when they are treated as outsiders (*Sotoba Komachi*). And not only goddesses. Human women.

The Fifth Stage: Connection

Hush, be humble, like the shizu cloth
woven from thread from a humble woman's spool.
Just as it loops around,
so I wish I could bring back the past. (*Futari Shizuka*)

For many spectators, the dominant perception of the fifth category is based on a number of spectacular plays featuring brave warriors conquering fearsome demons. This is certainly an undeniable trend, but quantitative analysis of the group as a whole reveals some other fascinating trends. This group of 53 plays is again conventionally organized according to dance as follows, according to Komparu Kunio:

–23 *hataraki* plays featuring not only the conquest of demons (more masculine than feminine), but also the revelation of one benevolent dragon god and one fox god who helps a blacksmith forge a sword;
–18 semi-*hataraki* plays, featuring a higher ratio of feminine demons, but also a number of warriors battling one another;
–seven *hayamai* plays, more vigorous bodhisattvas, deities, and spirits displaying their supernatural energies than warriors in combat;
–two *chūnomai* plays, both featuring the same benign local spirit; and
–three exceptional unclassified plays, one featuring the spirit of a crane, one a family of lions, and one a mysterious mountain crone.

Because the choreography aligns more closely with character types than it did in the third category, resorting did not reveal any other significant patterns as it did with the third category.

From the fourth category I learned that cynicism based on fear is not critically objective; it is simply the opposite extreme of naiveté, biased in the other direction. The fifth category had three more lessons for me: about intersectionality, about false dilemmas, and about connection.

In addition to feeling frequent pressure to justify my love of this art that had been dominated for half a millennium by men, I have in my time been particularly torn when dealing with these demonic characters, concentrated in the fifth category, who may have been demonized to justify the subjugation of indigenous peoples. Their position is similar to that of the god of Kazuraki, but they are represented far less sympathetically. Does my research do them justice?

I was accorded an opportunity to consider this problem through intense, close-up observation of stage performances when I was engaged to work with the troupe of Noh actors, led by Master Sakai Otoshige of the Kanze School, who performed at the opening and closing ceremonies of the Daimyo exhibit at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. in the fall and winter of 1989-1990. The programs included performances of two spectacular fifth-category demon plays, *Tsuchigumo* (Earth Spider) and *Funa Benkei* (Benkei Aboard).

"Earth spider" is a derogatory epithet used in early historical records to describe indigenous people viewed as enemies of the imperial court, such as the clan represented by Hitokotonushi in *Kazuraki*. *Tsuchigumo* depicts a band of samurai in a spectacular battle with such a demon. The webs cast by the demon are among the most elaborate stage properties in the Noh theater.

The gender of the demon is also ambiguous. Its ferocious nature may lead the spectator to assume it is male, but the mask, Shikami, is one that is also used to portray female demons in plays such as *Momijigari* (Maple Leaf Viewing). This ambiguity is also heightened by the appearance of the female servant in Act One of *Tsuchigumo*: her name is Kochō (Butterfly). These extralinguistic features suggest an ironic, metaphorical interpretation of this play as a psychological drama, where the demon is more a manifestation of inner fear than a demonization of an ethnic group—one where the very act of demonization is actually being ironically interrogated.

Noh artists are notorious for refusing to answer questions about the correct interpretation of a play, and over the years I have come to see the wisdom of their position. It is not simply to retain the interest of the audience by teasing their curiosity. By leaving the interpretation open-ended, they are entrusting us with the responsibility to judge for ourselves. In academic terms, they are taking a social constructionist position, inviting us to co-construct the meaning of the play. If we want an emancipatory interpretation to become the dominant interpretation in our society, we must intervene to change the dominant discourse. This is my challenge.

The other play performed at the National Gallery of Art, *Funa Benkei*, depicts two possible responses to another demonic assault. This play is based on the historical tales of the eleventh-century Genpei Wars between the Genji (Minamoto) and Heike (Taira) clans. When the ghost of a slain Taira warrior rises from the waves and appears to attack the fugitive Minamoto Yoshitsune, Yoshitsune first draws his sword to defend himself. But then his loyal retainer Benkei, a Buddhist warrior-priest, draws out his rosary and engages with the demon in a spiritual battle. As in *Atsumori*, there is no sense that one approach is superior to the other, another common false dilemma—the second lesson reinforced through my engagement with this group of plays. The sense is rather that both physical and mental preparation are required.

There is also an ironic sense that the fugitives might have been more mentally prepared had they not left another loyal companion behind: Shizuka, whose name means "serenity." This powerful female figure leads to the third lesson garnered from this category, a lesson with variations throughout the canon: the importance of connection.

Many people have the impression that the Noh drama is a minimalist art with very few characters in the dramatis personae, more psychological drama than antagonistic conflict. But that aesthetic is only part of the art of this total theater. And Shizuka is one major figure who often appears in pairs, with both women and men.

In *Futari Shizuka*, a third-category play, a Shinto priest witnesses the possession of a village woman by the spirit of Shizuka, with both earthly and ghostly entities appearing on the stage. In *Yoshino Shizuka*, also a third-category play, Shizuka collaborates with another retainer of Yoshitsune's named Tadanobu to sway public opinion which has turned against their lord. The fourth-category play *Shōzon* is named for the main character, with Shizuka helping Yoshitsune prepare to defend himself against the assassin's attack.

Shizuka performs the song cited above in both *Futari Shizuka* and *Yoshino Shizuka*, and it is also paraphrased in another fifth-category demon play, *Kurozuka* (or *Adachigahara*). Out of context, it might sound like a very passive expression of resignation. But according to legend, it is actually a brave expression of defiance.

Legendary accounts such as *Gikeiki* state that when Yoshitsune was hounded to his death by assassins sent by his brother, the shogun Yoritomo, Shizuka was pregnant with his child. She was taken prisoner, and Yoritomo announced that if it was a girl, it would be spared, but if it was a boy, it would be killed. During her captivity, Shizuka was ordered to dance for the shogun's entertainment. This is the song she is said to have sung, and this subtext is evoked by every reference or allusion to it.

The traditional association between women and textile arts such as spinning and weaving is commemorated in one more fifth-category play that I find especially empowering: *Taema*. Taema is the name of the Buddhist temple in Nara where a young noblewoman named Chūjōhime took refuge in order to escape being used as a political pawn in an arranged marriage. The play now belongs to the *hayamai* subcategory of enlightened bodhisattvas, deities and spirits, but was originally composed as a deity play and only later reclassified when its strong Buddhist coloring came to render it politically inexpedient in an era dominated by nativist philosophy; the powerful enlightened mortal woman, already rare enough, suffered collateral damage in the process.

Like *Unoha*, *Taema* was definitively composed by Zeami, and the two plays bear comparison in many ways despite the difference in the spiritual traditions they draw on. Not only do both feature women who suffered from the politics of marriage; both are weavers. Toyotamahime weaves cormorant feathers to thatch her parturition chamber as a magical charm to ensure safe childbirth, as the cormorant is known for its ability to easily swallow fish whole; Chūjōhime's passionate spiritual devotion enables her, with divine aid, to weave a mandala overnight. Both are compared with the dragon princess of the Lotus Sutra who instantaneously bypassed the mandatory rebirth as a man and achieved enlightenment.

But the greatest discovery made by comparing these two plays is a renewed realization of how often these powerful archetypal women actually appear in Noh plays in pairs. Sometimes, as in the case of *Unoha*, the companion is young, nameless, and speaks very few lines, and thus is easily overlooked when the play is only enjoyed through reading the text rather than appreciating the total theater experience. But in the case of *Taema*, the companion is an older mentor.

Spurred by this recognition to search for other patterns of companionship, I was led to examine one more play featuring a powerful archetypal female figure in the fifth category more closely: *Yamanba* (Mountain Crone). Yamanba magically appears out of nowhere to reveal the reality of her existence with all its confusion and delusion to an earnest young dancer, Hyakuma Yamanba, who had created a dance based on her limited understanding of the legend of the mysterious crone. I came to feel that Yamanba is such an overwhelming, awe-inspiring figure that both scholars and spectators have failed to appreciate the significance of her relationship with the shadow figure of Hyakuma, who pales in comparison.

Conclusion

Over the centuries, the Noh drama has evolved to frequently serve the social role of commemoration—sometimes celebration and sometimes requiem.

One fascinating example of Noh as celebration, in addition to the standard first-category plays which generally celebrate the peace in the realm achieved by the just reign of the benevolent ruler, is *Iwafune* (The Stone Ship). *Iwafune* was never totally excluded from the canon like *Unoha*, but it was extensively edited,

so that in standard performance, the main character came to be a masculine dragon deity. But like many other kaminō documented by Takemoto, the original main character was a feminine deity, Ame no Sakume, an archetypal Seeker or Explorer. The dragon was her guardian. The same group of Noh artists that revived *Unoha* also restored *Iwafune* to its original form in 1991.

I add *Iwafune* to my selection of highlights from the five standard categories presented here because it also acts as a bridge between canonical categories of Noh due to its adaptability in performance to either open or close a full program of Noh. When performed in closing, it is not classified as fifth-category but rather as *shūgen* or felicitation, after the typical conquest of demons leading to a restoration of peace and order.

In fact, *Iwafune* exhibits a number of striking parallels to *Unoha*. It depicts an intercultural world, with Ame no Sakume first appearing in the guise of a Chinese youth at the international market at Sumiyoshi, one who is fluent in the Japanese language. The youth cites the same story from the Lotus Sutra (also cited in *Taema*) about the Dragon Princess who was granted an instantaneous rebirth as a man in recognition of her bodhisattva deeds to facilitate her attainment of perfect enlightenment.

But I would argue that the main affinity between *Unoha* and *Iwafune* lies in their evocation of a sense of wonder. In *Unoha*, the miracle is the parting of the seas to permit human passage. In *Iwafune*, it is the stone ship. This mythic image lodges deeply in our unconscious precisely because of its paradoxical nature, engaging us perennially in an exploration of potential interpretations. Some may say it is a play on the words *iwa* (boulder) and *iwa(f)u* (celebration). Others may say it is simply a metaphor for strength and security. The more fanciful may wonder if it was the vehicle of choice in the primordial soup before the separation of heaven and earth, or if perhaps it only turned to stone after entering Earth's atmosphere.

Whether employed in celebration of peace and beauty or requiem for loss, irony and ambiguity have proven essential to keep the art of Noh from devolving into a rigid fossilized relic. As Master Ōtsuki wrote in the program for another revival project he hosted:

> History will judge the significance of our work. But it is without question we ourselves who, one by one, create that history. We must not simply await the judgment of history; rather with each opportunity to perform, and to repeat that performance, we must continue our efforts to create new Noh to suit the times. We must never forget that it is the collective accumulation of such effort and action that gives birth to history. (Ōtsuki 1989, translated in Yokota 1997)

A perfect canon is a holy grail. But even in spaces where minority voices still struggle to gain recognition, including the canon of Noh, they cannot and will not be silenced, and call to us now to hear them and share them, taking irony and ambiguity as allies to enable us to hear them most clearly.

The very grandness of some of the archetypes I have introduced here may be overwhelming sometimes. Clarissa Pinkola Estes, author of the feminist classic *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, offers some sage advice about how to most graciously invite them into our lives.

> If you have a deep scar, that is a door, if you have an old, old story, that is a door. If you love the sky and the water so much you almost cannot bear it, that is a door. If you yearn for a deeper life, a full life, a sane life, that is a door. (19)

Estes also provides wise counsel on how to choose who to invite into our lives.

> Like the wolf, intuition has claws that pry things open and pin things down, it has eyes that can see through the shields of persona, it has ears that hear beyond the range of mundane human hearing. Listen to your intuition. If a muscle is not used, it will wither. Strengthen your bond with your intuitive nature by listening inwardly at every turn in the road. (85-86)

Estes is a Jungian psychoanalyst, and the next quote is especially aimed at women who try to do too much, possibly due to misunderstanding of the power of the archetype.

> But the cries of the suffering world cannot all be answered by a single person all the time. We can truly only choose to respond to those that allow us to go home on a regular basis. Otherwise our heart-lights dim to almost nothing. No woman can emanate an archetype continuously. Only the archetype itself can be ever-able, all giving, eternally energetic. They are ideals, not achievable by humans, and not meant to be. A woman has to go away and be with herself and look into how she came to be trapped in an archetype to begin with. (282)

In closing, I propose that we reflect upon these archetypal figures from the canon of Noh with Estes' advice clearly in mind.

Toyotamahime's spirit still inspires us today to participate collectively in annual rituals such as her own of thatching her birthing chamber with cormorant feathers, to thereby recall all the associated wisdom involved, and to be careful what we wish for.

Atsumori and Rensei eternally remind us of our common humanity and the possibility of conscientious objection and renunciation of war—though they leave the decision to us.

Hitokotonushi challenges us to think about the deity's reason for choosing a feminine form to express humiliation at the hands of an oppressor, as well as the need for the very binary itself.

Komachi offers an empowering role model who refuses to be shamed, who knows how to say no, who commands respect with presence and poise in the face of the most bigoted attempts to exclude her.

Shizuka, Yamanba, and Chūjōhime remind us to go away and be with ourselves, and warn us of the risk of becoming trapped either in stereotypes or in the very archetypes we adore.

Ame no Sakume reminds us to remain open to paradoxical questions and cherish our sense of wonder.

Each of us must decide for ourselves which doors we will open, which questions we will ask, which traditions we will observe, which voices we will listen to, so that our connections empower us on all our quests for meaning in the worlds of research, teaching, and life.

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